

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A shift lever apparatus comprising:  
a base member;  
a shift lever; and  
at least one planar four-bar linkage mechanism supporting said shift lever so as to be movable relative to said base member.
2. A shift lever apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said planar four-bar linkage mechanism includes four link elements including a base-side link element, a lever-side link element opposing said base-side link element, and a pair of connecting link elements connecting said base-side link element and said lever-side link element, said shift lever being supported by said lever-side link element, and said base member supporting said base-side link element.
3. A shift lever apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said planar four-bar linkage mechanism includes an operational plane in which said four link elements conduct a link motion, and said lever-side link element is parallelly or substantially parallelly shiftable in said operational plane relative to said base member.
4. A shift lever apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said planar four-bar linkage mechanism includes four connecting portions connecting said lever-side link element, said base-side link element and said pair of connecting link elements to each other, said four connecting portions each having a rotational axis, all of said rotational axes of said four connecting portions being parallel to each other.

5. A shift lever apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said base-side link element and said lever-side link element are parallel to each other, and said pair of connecting link elements are parallel to each other.
6. A shift lever apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said operational plane of said planar four-bar linkage mechanism is movable in a plane or in a direction perpendicular to said operational plane.
7. A shift lever apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said base-side link element includes a rotational axis, and said operational plane of said planar four-bar linkage mechanism is rotatable about said rotational axis of said base-side link element in a plane perpendicular to said operational plane.
8. A shift lever apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said planar four-bar linkage mechanism includes an operational plane in which said four link elements conduct a link motion, and said base-side link element includes a rotational axis, said operational plane of said planar four-bar linkage mechanism being rotatable about said rotational axis of said base-side link element in a plane perpendicular to said operational plane, so that said shift lever is able to shift its position parallelly without changing its inclination relative to said base member in said operational plane of said planar four-bar linkage mechanism, and said shift lever is able to rotate about said rotational axis of said base-side link element in a plane perpendicular to said operational plane of said planar four-bar linkage mechanism.
9. A shift lever apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said base member includes a gate member including a shift lever path through which said shift lever extends, said shift

lever path including two path portions extending parallel to each other, said gate member including an intermediate wall located between said two path portions, said intermediate wall having opposite side surfaces parallel to each other.

10. A shift lever apparatus according to claim 2, wherein at least one of said pair of connecting link elements is curved.

11. A shift lever apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said base member has a surface having a plurality of concave portions spaced from each other for causing an irregular feeling to motion of said shift lever at said concave portions, and a cylinder portion is provided to a link element of said four-bar linkage mechanism, a pin being slidably inserted in said cylinder portion, said pin being biased against said surface of said base member.